

ANTIGENIC EPITOPES AND MOSAIC POLYPEPTIDES OF HEPATITIS C VIRUS PROTEINS

ABSTRACT

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Antigenic epitopes of hepatitis C virus (HCV) and mosaic HCV polypeptides useful as reagents in assays for the diagnosis or monitoring of HCV in a biological sample. The antigenic epitopes and mosaic polypeptides are also useful for the construction of immunogenic pharmaceutical compositions, such as vaccines. The mosaic polypeptides are artificial composite proteins constructed from diagnostically relevant antigenic regions derived from different HCV proteins. Preferably, the mosaic polypeptides contain antigenic epitopes from the core protein, NS3 protein, and NS4 protein. The preferred mosaic polypeptides optionally contain an additional antigenic epitope from either the NS4 protein or the NS5a protein or both.